

## ***Flooding is 'substantial but not catastrophic,' Congressman says***

*By Sarah AuBuchon, Jefferson County Journal*

U.S. Rep. Russ Carnahan, D-St. Louis, toured flooded areas in Herculaneum and Ste. Genevieve Monday morning to gather a better perspective of the damage south of St. Louis.

"It's a substantial flood, but not catastrophic," Carnahan said, overlooking the swollen waters of Joachim Creek that covered the ball fields at Bates Memorial Park.

"Our levee systems around St. Louis are largely working, and that helps." Carnahan met with emergency management personnel and city and county officials as he toured the Third Congressional District to address concerns about flood waters and assess the damage.

Although Joachim Creek crept close to the bottom of the new bridge spanning the creek on Joachim Avenue, the deck remained dry. Waters from the creek flooded nearby Route 61-67 just north of Joachim Avenue, causing the 18,000 cars traveling that route per day to detour over the new bridge into Herculaneum.

City Administrator Bill Whitmer told Carnahan the city has not had any major problems from floodwaters because city officials had time to prepare for the rising water.

"The Brown Street lift station is an island and there are a few manholes underwater, but we've taken action to keep sewage out of the Mississippi," Whitmer said.

Carnahan didn't visit the Twin Cities this trip, as the new Rita Loveless levee completed in 2005 once again passed the test of rising waters, keeping Festus and Crystal City dry.

"This is nowhere near what we had in '93, but so far we're doing well," said Tom Lovelace, a member of the levee commission who worked for the Army Corps of Engineers. "It's very pleasing to watch television and not see Festus and Crystal City on it."

Lovelace said had the levee failed or not been built, the intersection of Truman Boulevard and Bailey would have probably seen about three feet of flood water for about a week.

Carnahan was instrumental in helping Herculaneum get a \$2.1 million federal grant that will help fund a new bridge that will span Joachim Creek on Riverview Drive near Buchheits.

Mayor Gina Vinyard said the two-lane bridge will be 14 feet above flood stage and will mostly service traffic from Doe Run.

"It will get Doe Run traffic out of our town," she said.

Whitmer said the new bridge will help alleviate traffic through town whenever Route 61-67 is closed during flooding and will provide a link between the "historic" and "emerging" areas of

Herculaneum, allowing residents faster access to and from town.

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